

Outline of Fr. Patrick Winslow's Lecture on Lesson 23

I. Pastoral Points

- a. V29 Hypocrisy.
 - i. St. Padre Pio said, "**all sin is hypocrisy.**"
 1. As a Christian we are one thing, but when we sin we do another.
 2. This is hypocrisy, to be one thing and to do another.
 3. Conversely, holiness can be regarded as Christian integrity.

- b. V40: Pilate offers the choice for all men: the sinful son of the father *or* the sinless Son of the Eternal Father. Furthermore, Barabbas is referred to as a thief. **All sin could be described as thievery** – taking that which is not ours to take. Christ is the opposite to that of a thief. He is the one who restores, on behalf of the thief.
 - i. Pontius Pilate is the only historical figure mentioned by name in the Creed other than Jesus and Mary.
 1. Pontius Pilate lays before all of history the choice: the sinful son or the Eternal Son – whom do you choose?
 2. ...and so we must choose.
 - ii. Before we become too smug, let us be honest with ourselves.
 1. All of us in some way have chosen the sinful son.
 - a. With each act of sin we have personally chosen this sinful choice over and above Our Lord.
 - b. This is why the whole Church joins in with the crowd when we liturgically recall the Passion of Christ, "crucify Him." [Palm Sunday & Good Friday]
 2. What enables us to recant our cry of "crucify Him" or "Barabbas" is the very Passion itself.
 - a. With every sin a three-fold debt is incurred.
 - i. A debt against others.
 - ii. ...against one's self.
 - iii. ...against God.
 - b. The Passion is the paying of that debt on our behalf.
 - i. This is what forgiveness is.
 - c. To sin against God is an infinite offense, an infinite debt to be paid.
 - i. We are helpless in the face of such a debt.
 - ii. Christ pays the debt all men have and will have incurred against God in the infinite offering of Himself to the Father.
 - iii. By His blood we have been forgiven. By His wounds we are healed.
 - d. At the last supper, Our Lord says, "do this in remembrance of me."
 - i. This has many implications and meanings, including calling us to take up our crosses.
 - ii. That is...forgive...offer ourselves for the sins committed against us.
 - iii. Pay the debt others have incurred against you.

- e. Of everyone in Heaven, the three-fold debt of every sin will have been accounted for.
 - i. Against God – through the Passion of the Son
 - ii. Against others – by our crosses of having willingly suffered the debt of those who have trespassed against us. (Recall the Our Father)
 - iii. Against self – by our humble acceptance of the suffering of Christ and others for our salvation.

- c. Finally, this is the beauty of **plenary indulgences**.
 - i. A plenary indulgence atones for all the particular sins of one’s past life. In a successful act of plenary indulgence all three debts have been accounted for.
 - 1. By meeting the criteria of making a good confession, communing with the Church and (this is the big one) being detached from all sin, venial and mortal, all debts are paid.
 - 2. The threefold debt is attended to in this way:
 - a. First, the debt against God is made right through the Passion of Christ.
 - b. Second, the debt against others is made right by the saintly sufferings of the members of the Church. By the grace of God, the debt we incur against one person can be shouldered by another through the Mystical Body of Christ. (Just as you can pay off another person’s debt in the world of finance so can we in the order of grace.)
 - i. The Church holds the keys to the ‘treasure trove’ of her members’ penitential offerings.
 - ii. She opens it in an act of plenary indulgence to make right for the sins committed against Her Mystical Body – consequently She is Herself imitating Christ in offering forgiveness.
 - c. Third, the debt against oneself is made right by a perfect act of humility (that humility which is necessary to make a good act of contrition and to be detached from all sin). Such humility is the suffering of oneself for oneself.
 - i. It is the new man in Christ making an offering of the scourges which strikes painful blows to the pride of fallen man.
 - ii. Humility is a form of suffering – a suffering of man’s fallen pride.
 - ii. A successful plenary indulgence is an act that makes right the total balances of the three-fold debts of sin –
 - the infinite balance against God;
 - the balance against others; and
 - the balance against sin.

It is the beautiful economy of grace at work with its mathematics of justice and mercy.